

For Immediate Release
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Radon: Protect your health. Test your home.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that comes from the breakdown of uranium that is found in rocks and soil. It usually enters buildings through cracks in foundation floors and walls, gaps in pipes, open floor drains, or any other area of exposed soil. Radon gas is invisible: you can't see it, smell it or taste it. The only way to know the radon level in your home is to test for it with a radon tester.

Long term exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in Canada. The Northwestern Health Unit is recommending radon testing for all homes to determine if you and your family are at risk of radon exposure.

"Radon is a health concern in Northwestern Ontario, but few homeowners realize the risk or how to protect themselves against it," says Rick Pascoe, Public Health Inspector with the Northwestern Health Unit. "We are joining other public health units in Ontario with a collaborative awareness campaign to help the public better understand this issue."

Higher than recommended radon levels can be found in any home regardless of the age and location, which makes it impossible to predict the risk of exposure without testing. The good news is that testing for radon is inexpensive and easy. Test kits are available for purchase at local household product stores and online. To get the most accurate results, Health Canada recommends testing for a minimum of three months during the winter in the lowest lived-in area of your home. If your home tests above Health Canada's guideline of 200 Bq/m³ it is recommended that actions be taken to reduce the radon gas in the home. The Northwestern Health Unit can provide information to guide homeowners in testing for radon and how to find a certified radon mitigation contractor, if needed.

For more information, contact a public health inspector at the Northwestern Health Unit or call 1-888-404-4231. Information from the Government of Canada is available at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/envIRON/radon-eng.php>.

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For media inquiries, please contact:

Rick Pascoe
Public Health Inspector
Northwestern Health Unit
807-223-3301 ext. 3522
rpascoe@nwhu.on.ca